

Regional ports

Puget Sound port competitiveness continued to deteriorate in the highly-competitive transportation and logistics industry that shapes the global economy. Questionable management practices, overlapping administrative functions, underinvestment in critical facilities and small-minded political attitudes significantly handicap our ports and, consequently, our state economy.

When asked in the survey, 65 percent of respondents support merging the major ports of Puget Sound into one authority to eliminate duplicate functions and improve value to taxpayers.

I introduced bipartisan legislation to do this. The bill generated broad positive interest. However, the Port of Tacoma’s resistance to the proposal prevented any action this year. I will bring this up again next year.



Lighter side

This year I celebrated my 50th birthday. As an unabashed baby-boomer, I felt the need to celebrate with an appropriate gesture. The cherry red Italian sports car cost \$120,000 and growing my hair long only cost \$20 to fix...after I came to my senses. As sensitive as the political community is to managing its “image” I decided to have some fun. The most common remark was “what’s up with the George Washington look?” My wife is now very happy that a trip to the barber-shop is on my calendar.



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Rep. Glenn Anderson

2008 Legislative Review

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

This year’s short, 60-day, legislative session adjourned March 13. This newsletter is a review of the most significant items that were considered. I hope you find it helpful. Also included are results from my November district survey. Thank you for taking the time to participate - I personally read every questionnaire.

The political make up of the Legislature is very lopsided with Democrats having a 2:1 supermajority in both the House (64D–34R) and Senate (32D-17R), as well as control of the governor’s mansion. With one-party control of Olympia I expected greater progress on the many pressing challenges facing our state. Instead, most major decisions were “kicked into the future” to be addressed at a date sometime after November of this year. In short, nothing was actually fixed, but a lot of time and money was spent.

Unfortunately, the role of special interests in Olympia is now stronger than ever. It appears that Washington state Democrats are making the same mistakes that Washington D.C. Republicans made in seeking political power for the sake of being in power, not to fix the challenging issues that face real people.

My commitment to you as a state representative is to be a bipartisan problem-solver, and to address the issues squarely and negotiate for the best possible long-term outcome for the greatest number of people.

Thank you for the e-mails during session suggesting which way to vote on various legislation. I never cease to be amazed at the common-sense insight that so many of you take the time to share. This is your government, and your participation makes it work better.

Best regards,


Glenn Anderson

The economy – The big picture



The impact of the sub-prime mortgage meltdown continues to significantly damage our national economy, and has created a global banking credit crunch that continues to

deteriorate. The recent U.S. Federal Reserve Bank interventions to prop up Wall Street banks are the most serious since the Great Depression. The dollar's value continues to decline in world markets, reflecting the mammoth debt the U.S. economy is carrying. A rapidly declining dollar creates extraordinary risks for price inflation, flat wages and slow economic growth. Although Washington's economy is doing better than the nation's, that is unlikely to continue.

From the district survey 68 percent of households responded that they were either "breaking even" or "losing ground" on their economic security. Only 28 percent felt like they were "getting ahead."

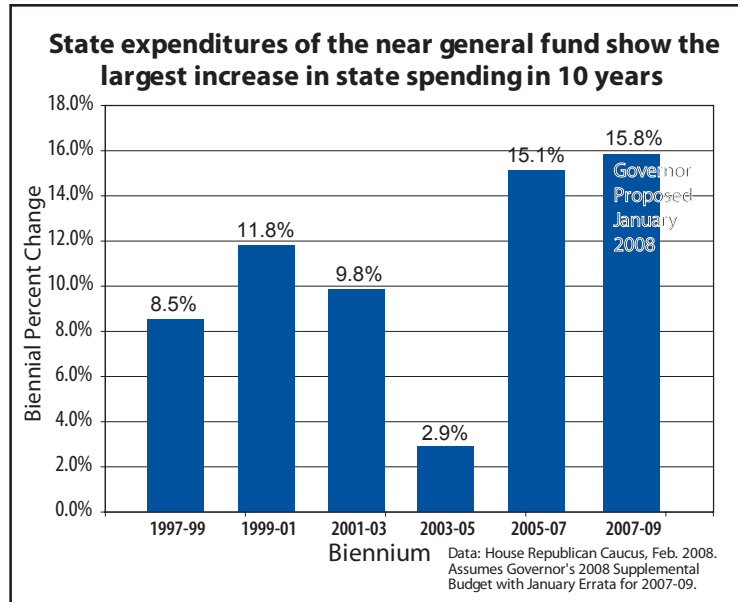
State operating budget – red ink grows

Over the last four years, state spending has increased by \$8.4 billion. This 33 percent increase is the largest in state history. The budget passed this session added another \$291 million in new spending.

The rate of growth of state spending (16 percent) is now more than double the rate of state revenue growth (7 percent). Nonpartisan staff estimates a budget deficit of \$2.4 billion next year, not including roughly \$800 million that will be required to enhance school employee salaries mandated by a recent court decision. All this adds up to a \$3.3 billion deficit.

In the district survey 84 percent of you responded that it was better to "act now to prevent a budget deficit" versus "waiting till it actually happens." A full 75 percent of you believe that the best way to deal with the state budget deficit was with "no new taxes and cutting spending." Only 14 percent approved of raising taxes and capping or cutting existing spending.

This out-of-control government spending is reckless and that's why I voted against this year's supplemental budget.



Transportation budget – more red ink

Continuing traffic gridlock is a source of incredible frustration for all of us and hurts our economy. The backlog of transportation projects in the Puget Sound region alone is estimated to cost \$63 billion. Due to the rapid cost inflation of energy and construction materials since the 9.5-cent gas tax increase of 2005, the state's transportation budget faces almost a \$2 billion deficit for promised projects.



The need to prioritize and fund transportation projects is essential to support Washington's economy. This year's supplemental transportation budget did little to get our most pressing projects on track and that's why I voted against it.

Replacing the 520 bridge

Unfortunately, lack of action on this important project showcases why people are so fed up with the culture of incompetence of state government to get things done.

Due to transportation funding shortfalls, Governor Gregoire proposed and the majority party supported a

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"revised" six-lane bridge design that would be funded by pre-construction tolling on the existing State Route 520 bridge. The idea of tolling what amounts to a sinking bridge is ridiculous. No safeguards were put in place to assure tolling revenues would not be diverted to other non-transportation-related programs.

Tolling would be a good tool to make steady progress on large infrastructure projects such as the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the 520 bridge, but those who pay the tolls must have assurances that the funds raised will be used to improve that roadway only. Sixty-six percent of survey respondents said they would support tolling if it's dedicated to specific a transportation project.



K-12 education funding

School funding challenges in the K-12 system were on the back burner again this year. Incremental increases in funding were made, however none of the necessary major reforms were addressed. The Basic Education Financing Task Force I serve on is supposed to provide comprehensive recommendations to address education funding by December for the 2009 Legislature to take action.

About 60 percent of survey respondents support creating a separate and dedicated K-12 budget that is fully funded before the state spends tax dollars on any other program. When considering future budget cuts 68 percent of respondents said K-12 school funding should take priority over health care subsidies.

Global climate change

Global warming science generates a heated debate. I have spent a lot of time investigating the issue and believe that overwhelming scientific evidence shows it is real and is caused by both natural phenomenon (especially solar activity) and human activity.



Legislation was introduced to align our state with the Western Regional Climate Change Initiative, which includes California, Oregon and British Columbia. I voted for this bill because it is important to have a common regional structure for dealing with the issue. This year I also supported a law requiring auto manufacturers to disclose the carbon emissions of vehicles.

Another law passed that could lead to an expansion of the state's Growth Management Act. The bill creates pilot projects with the intention of requiring complicated carbon emissions planning for communities. I voted against this bill because it didn't provide best practices guidelines or safeguard individual property rights. I also opposed legislation that would have increased car tab renewal fees based on a vehicle's engine size.

Elections

Restoring voter trust?

Voting is our most fundamental civil right. Many improvements have been made since the controversial outcome of the 2004 gubernatorial race, but more improvements need to be made. In fact, 83 percent of respondents support requiring valid photo ID, proof of citizenship, and appearing in person to register to vote. Eighty-five percent oppose same-day voter registration. I introduced House Bill 1468 to address this important issue, however the Democrat super-majority in Olympia refused to consider the legislation.

Public Financing for Local Government Elections

A new law passed that allows local governments to use public tax dollars to finance political campaigns. This proposal generated fierce debate. Numerous amendments were offered to build safeguards into the law to prevent abuse like what has happened in Portland, Ore. Every amendment was defeated on a party-line vote.

This legislation allows local incumbents to vote to use your tax dollars to pay for their political campaigns. I did not support this bill because it did not prevent local tax dollars from being transferred to state partisan political party coffers. I believe local tax dollars should pay for public improvements like roads and parks; not political yard signs, mailers and robo-calls.